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Seventy-fifth session

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### Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

#### Summary record of the 2nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 14 October 2020, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Kelapile ..... (Botswana)  
*later:* Mr. Sanabria Rivarola (Vice-Chair) ..... (Paraguay)  
*later:* Mr. Kelapile ..... (Botswana)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### **Statement by the President of the General Assembly on the work of the Committee**

1. **Mr. Bozkir** (Turkey), President of the General Assembly, said that the seventy-fifth session would be affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, not least due to the limitations placed on in-person meetings. He commended the members of the Bureau for their pragmatism in adopting a hybrid working model that included in-person meetings, as the benefit of face-to-face diplomacy could not be taken for granted.

2. The issues handled by the Committee, while disparate, were fundamental to the work of the United Nations. Although the Organization's decolonization efforts over the previous 75 years had been a success story, there remained 17 cases in need of attention. He therefore encouraged the Committee to facilitate the exercise of self-determination by all colonial countries and peoples, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

3. No effort should be spared in protecting United Nations peacekeepers, who were sent to some of the most challenging places on earth, risking their own lives to protect others and fulfil their mandates. The Action for Peacekeeping initiative had set a clear road map for all stakeholders to renew their collective engagement with peacekeeping. He urged Member States to take advantage of the political momentum created by the initiative and translate commitments in support of peacekeeping into action.

4. Achieving peace in the Middle East had been on the Organization's agenda since its creation. More than seven decades on, resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained key to sustainable peace in the region. The United Nations must renew its commitment to peace and continue to support the two parties' efforts to resolve the conflict in accordance with international law and bilateral agreements, realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. By keeping the conflict and the plight of the Palestinians on the international agenda, the Committee was helping to fulfil the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and independence.

5. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had been a lifeline for Palestine refugees since its establishment in 1949. The Agency's mandate had been renewed the previous year in the Committee. Its services in such

areas as education, healthcare, protection, relief, infrastructure, camp improvement and emergency response would remain vital until a just solution to the question of Palestine refugees was found. Noting with concern the Agency's recurrent financial shortfalls, he encouraged Member States to give generously and consistently to UNRWA.

6. Member States must acknowledge the shared responsibility of preserving outer space for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of humankind, and find ways to reap the benefits of science and technology to invest in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Space-based technologies could help to address key issues related to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including climate change and natural disasters.

7. By adopting the Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, Member States had recommitted to the ideals of the Organization's founders. He encouraged the membership to work together in a spirit of compromise to achieve progress on the items on the Committee's agenda, and pledged his unwavering support for that effort.

### **Organization of work** ([A/75/250](#); [A/C.4/75/1](#); [A/C.4/75/INF/1](#) and [A/C.4/75/INF/4](#); [A/C.4/75/L.1](#))

8. The Chair recalled that, when the Committee had established its Working Group of the Whole on outer space, at its first meeting held on 8 October 2020 ([A/C.4/75/SR.1](#)), the election of the Chair of the Working Group had been postponed pending the completion of the decision-making process of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). Since that meeting, COPUOS had elected Mr. Marius-Ioan Piso of Romania as its Chair. He therefore proposed that, in accordance with its established practice, the Committee elect Mr. Piso as Chair of the Working Group.

9. *It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 50: Effects of atomic radiation**  
(*continued*) ([A/75/46](#))

**Agenda item 51: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space** (*continued*) ([A/75/20](#))

**Agenda item 52: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East**  
(*continued*) ([A/75/13](#), [A/75/196](#), [A/75/299](#) and [A/75/305](#))

**Agenda item 53: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories** (*continued*) ([A/75/199](#), [A/75/328](#), [A/75/336](#) and [A/75/376](#))

**Agenda item 54: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects** (*continued*)

**Agenda item 55: Comprehensive review of special political missions** (*continued*) ([A/75/312](#))

**Agenda item 56: Questions relating to information**  
(*continued*) ([A/75/21](#) and [A/75/294](#))

**Agenda item 57: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations**  
(*continued*) ([A/75/23](#) and [A/75/64](#))

**Agenda item 58: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories** (*continued*) ([A/75/23](#))

**Agenda item 59: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations** (*continued*) ([A/75/23](#) and [A/75/73](#))

**Agenda item 60: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories** (*continued*) ([A/75/74](#) and [A/75/74/Add.1](#))

**Agenda item 61: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples** (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*) ([A/75/23](#), [A/75/73](#), [A/75/220](#) and [A/75/367](#))

10. **Ms. Austin** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group It followed the activities of the Department of Global Communications closely and commended its continued efforts to adapt to the use of virtual modalities to disseminate information on the United Nations amidst

the ongoing restrictions imposed by the pandemic. The international community had been compelled to take concerted action to address evolving complex challenges that had been compounded by the pandemic. By rising to the challenge, the Organization was demonstrating that multilateralism remained central to such efforts.

11. The pandemic-related proliferation of misinformation and disinformation had intensified the need for accurate, credible, science-based information, a need that the Department was well placed to meet. The United Nations information centres played a valuable role in supporting the resident coordinator system to disseminate information on the activities of the United Nations system. The Group appreciated the Department's outreach and took note of its new communications campaigns aimed at stemming the tide of misinformation and disinformation, in particular the Verified campaign announced by the Secretary-General in 2020. The first global communications strategy provided a useful framework for highlighting the Organization's work while delivering messages in a manner that would spur the target audience to action.

12. Multilingualism was a core United Nations value and a main driver of international unity and understanding, connecting people to the Organization and maximizing the reach of its message to culturally and linguistically diverse audiences. The demand for content in languages other than English was growing rapidly, with United Nations News in Spanish accounting for the largest share of the overall audience, surpassing that of United Nations News in English for the first time. The Group encouraged the Secretariat to continue exploring alternatives to procure for each United Nations News website the resources needed to produce multilingual content in the six official languages and in Portuguese, Kiswahili and Hindi.

13. Given that fully inclusive dialogue among Member States was just as important as disseminating the Organization's message worldwide, the Department must continue to endeavour to ensure parity among the six official languages in all official activities, even prior to resuming the usual mode of work. United Nations information centres had done important work with local offices and Resident Coordinators to develop content for local populations and governments, disseminating information about the Organization's activities and engaging with target audiences while also providing them with platforms for engagement on topics of interest. The Department should continue supporting United Nations information centres and reaching different audiences using innovative platforms, including through multilingual digital outreach. At the

same time, in view of persistent digital disparities, the Department should promote international cooperation aimed at capacity building in developing countries. The use of new technologies should be fully compatible with the principles of sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the internationally recognized rules of civil coexistence and friendly relations among States.

14. The Department should continue to promote relevant United Nations conferences and decisions, with special emphasis on sustainable development, climate change, peacekeeping, decolonization, gender equality and the free flow of information and knowledge. It should also intensify its support of system-wide efforts to eradicate all forms of hatred, intolerance, discrimination on the basis of religion or belief, harassment, racism, hate speech, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Group expected the Department to cover on an equal basis all General Assembly-mandated summits, international conferences and meetings. Disparities between developed and developing countries in terms of the use of all official languages affected the capability of public, private and other media and individuals to disseminate information and communicate effectively. For its part, the Group would remain committed to the freedom, independence, pluralism and diversity of the media.

15. **Mr. Alizada** (Azerbaijan), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the Movement reiterated its strong support for UNRWA, whose mandate was to provide humanitarian, development and emergency assistance to more than 5.6 million Palestine refugees, pending the achievement of a just solution to their plight on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Agency's operations remained indispensable until such a solution was attained. Sustained, predictable and uninterrupted international support for UNRWA would remain critical to ensuring the continuity of its services, particularly in view of deteriorating socioeconomic conditions in the region, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Agency's recurrent, severe financial shortfalls. The Movement deeply regretted the exacerbation of the Agency's funding crisis following the punitive decision by the United States Government to abruptly terminate its funding to UNRWA, a decision that targeted the most vulnerable segment of the Palestinian people and imperilled regional stability. The Movement was also concerned by the Israeli authorities' announcement that UNRWA service provision in occupied East Jerusalem would be terminated. The Charter, the privileges and immunities of the Organization and the relevant United

Nations resolutions, including the Agency's mandate, must be respected.

16. The crisis in the Gaza Strip must be comprehensively addressed, in accordance with international law, as part of the overall effort to bring an end to the illegitimate Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 1967. The illegal Gaza blockade on Gaza must fully and immediately be lifted; that step was the only way for the Palestine refugee population in Gaza to become less dependent on UNRWA.

17. The Movement remained committed to promoting a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, including the plight of Palestine refugees, and would continue to support the Palestinian people's struggle to attain its legitimate national aspirations. Regrettably, despite those numerous resolutions, and despite repeated demands that Israel respect international law, the occupying Power's violations continued unabated. Those violations included the killing and injury of Palestinian civilians; the expansion of settlements, the separation wall and related infrastructure; the demolition of homes and confiscation of land and property; the exploitation of natural resources; forced displacement of Palestinian civilians; severe restrictions on movement; arrests and administrative detention of Palestinian civilians, including children; and excessive use of force, terror and provocations by Israeli settlers, extremists and security forces, including at the holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem. As a result, conditions on the ground had deteriorated severely, causing immense human suffering and hampering efforts to resume the political process.

18. The Movement continued to call for international action, particularly by the Security Council, to ensure accountability for, and the cessation of, the violations perpetrated by the occupying Power. The report of the Secretary-General on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population ([A/ES-10/794](#)) set out important information in that regard, and its recommendations required serious follow-up. A solution must be found to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, in accordance with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, which were a matter of long-standing international consensus. The plight of Palestine refugees should be addressed on the basis of General Assembly resolution [194 \(III\)](#).

19. The Movement commended the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, the

Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support and the Under-Secretary-General for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance for the swift and comprehensive measures taken to protect local populations and United Nations personnel on the ground from the pandemic. As a result of those measures, infection rates had remained relatively low.

20. After the failure of its previous session, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had engaged in substantive discussions on finding a way to make the report more user-friendly, less redundant and more useful to the Secretariat and to peacekeeping missions. To that end, the Movement had proposed a new structure based on the eight thematic chapters of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative. The proposal had been approved by consensus. However, given that the Action for Peacekeeping initiative did not cover the entire spectrum of peacekeeping, the Movement had suggested that the first report following the new structure could be treated as a trial run, and that the format could be tailored to the needs and evolution of peacekeeping in later years. The Movement had thus recently requested that a chapter on peacekeeping issues related to Africa be added to the report. That change was necessary in view of the prominence of African countries in peacekeeping, both as host countries and as troop- and police-contributing countries, and of the strategic partnership between the African Union and the United Nations on peace and security. He hoped that the request would be accepted, in order to avoid going back to the report's previous structure, which, although it did not meet the current needs or objectives of the Committee, did allow sufficient space for thorough consideration of most issues related to Africa.

21. The Movement welcomed the finalization of the peacekeeping performance and accountability framework following transparent and open consultations that had taken into account its main concerns, namely, the necessity to put all personnel – uniformed or civilian, in the field or at Headquarters – on equal footing. The framework established that performance was contingent on a number of factors, including but not limited to available human and financial resources, caveats and the link with the mandate. The Movement encouraged missions to engage closely with all relevant stakeholders in order to better understand the root causes of conflict. From start to finish, peacekeeping operations must be anchored in and guided by a political strategy. Realistic goals and objectives and a clear exit strategy, where applicable, were equally necessary. The payment of outstanding dues to troop- and police-contributing countries,

including those involving closed peacekeeping missions, must be addressed immediately.

22. In the light of the lessons learned from the pandemic, stakeholders needed to ensure that preparedness for health and other emergencies was embedded in planning and mandate setting. At the same time, such elements as the evolution of the nature of conflicts, the growing impact of disinformation on the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel, and the increased risks faced by peacekeepers, must be taken into consideration.

23. The sharp decrease in fatalities since 2017 – from 59 deaths in 2017 to 8 in 2020 – was the welcome result of a collective effort. While any fatality was one too many, every effort should be made to encourage that promising trend.

24. Two decades after the adoption of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), the women and peace and security agenda remained as relevant as ever. The Movement had been constructively engaged in supporting greater representation of women in peacekeeping, including by insisting on arrangements adapted to their specific needs.

25. Special political missions remained a key United Nations instrument for conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. While just as affected by the pandemic, special political missions had managed to mitigate its negative impact on mandate implementation and support Member States in their fight against COVID-19. Their flexible nature equipped them to work on a wide range of issues and contribute to promoting such important agendas and issues as equitable geographical representation and women and peace and security. Their crucial work was funded by the Organization's regular budget but did not follow that budgetary cycle. In order to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the budgetary process, the Movement once again called for special political missions to be financed according to the same criteria, methodology and mechanisms used to fund peacekeeping operations, and for a new, separate account to be established for such missions.

26. **Mr. de la Fuente Ramirez** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that CELAC remained fully committed to the goal of the third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and called on the administering Powers to cooperate with the Special Committee on decolonization and to adopt the measures necessary to attain the rapid decolonization of each of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, some of which were in the CELAC region, while taking the individual



situations of the Territories into account, including the fact that some of them were “special and particular” colonial situations involving sovereignty disputes. The administering Powers should regularly communicate accurate information on each of the Territories under their administration. At the January 2017 CELAC Summit, the Heads of State and Government of the Community had renewed their commitment to continue working to make Latin America and the Caribbean a region free of colonialism. The States members of CELAC welcomed the outcomes of the Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism held in Saint George’s from 2 to 4 May 2019.

27. CELAC supported the work of the Department of Global Communications, including the use of the six official languages on the decolonization website, but stressed the importance of ensuring that content was regularly updated in all languages. It urged the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Global Communications to ensure the widest dissemination of information on decolonization, including the coverage of all meetings of the Special Committee.

28. CELAC strongly supported the legitimate rights of the Argentine Republic in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. At the 2017 CELAC Summit, the States members of the Community had reaffirmed their abiding interest in the resumption of negotiations by the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom in order to find, as soon as possible, a peaceful and definitive solution to the dispute, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. They had also called on the Secretary-General of the United Nations, once again, to renew his efforts to fulfil the mission of good offices entrusted to him by the General Assembly with a view to the resumption of negotiations, and to report on the progress made. CELAC further reiterated the importance of observing General Assembly resolution 31/49 calling on both parties to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation, and highlighted the full willingness of the Argentine Government to set in place arrangements for the resumption of dialogue aimed at reaching a peaceful and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute. The position of CELAC had been reaffirmed in the special declaration on the question of the Malvinas Islands adopted at the 20th meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of CELAC on 24 September 2020.

29. With regard to the Special Committee’s 37 resolutions and decisions on Puerto Rico reaffirming the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence, the Heads of State and Government of CELAC had highlighted the Latin American and Caribbean character of Puerto Rico at the 2017 Summit and had recalled the Havana Declaration of 2014 calling for progress on the question of Puerto Rico.

30. With regard to the small island Territories of the Caribbean and the Pacific, which constituted the majority of existing Non-Self-Governing Territories, continued efforts were needed to facilitate the sustained and balanced growth of their fragile economies. Those Territories should be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination. Crucially, when the will of the majority of the indigenous population was unequivocal, the administering Powers should not directly or indirectly thwart that will. CELAC therefore remained concerned at the situation in the Turks and Caicos Islands and underscored the need to guarantee a truly inclusive, democratic and representative governmental approach to allow the people of that Territory to participate meaningfully in determining their own future. Similarly, special attention should be paid to key issues affecting small islands, such as accelerating loss of territory due to natural disasters and rising sea levels resulting from climate change.

31. CELAC endorsed all the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council on the question of Western Sahara, including General Assembly resolution 73/107, and reiterated its strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to reach a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution leading to the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in accordance with international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

32. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that prospects for sustainable development, peace and security had been undermined by the pandemic’s destabilizing effect on several countries, especially small island developing States. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and his team were to be commended for their responsiveness and continued efforts in spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic to field operations. Remarkably, various missions continued to provide support to political peace processes and respond to and prevent threats to civilians. As the Organization continued to monitor the situation of its field missions, CARICOM echoed the Secretary-General’s call for a global ceasefire.

33. Since its establishment pursuant to Security Council resolution 2476 (2019), the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) had worked to strengthen and promote political stability and good governance in Haiti, advising the Government on justice reform, human rights protection and other areas. CARICOM remained committed to advocating for and assisting Haiti on its path to sustainable peace, stability and development.

34. CARICOM continued to support the active participation of women in all efforts to promote peace and security and the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy, whose aim was to achieve gender parity among internationally recruited United Nations system staff by 2028. Notable progress had been made in appointing gender advisers to peacekeeping operations and mainstreaming gender perspectives throughout the Department of Peace Operations.

35. CARICOM recognized the efforts that had been made to measure and improve the performance of uniformed personnel and establish systems of accountability in peacekeeping operations, in line with the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. United Nations efforts to streamline and improve peacekeeping operations, including by revising the format of the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, were also to be commended.

36. The Department of Global Communications and its network of United Nations information centres did the vital work of disseminating reliable, accurate and science-based information, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to fostering awareness of and support for United Nations activities. CARICOM welcomed the cross-cutting reforms undertaken by the Department, which focused on strategic planning and management, strategic partnerships, resource mobilization and innovation. It supported the Department's commitment to monitoring and evaluation, which would ensure that the qualitative and quantitative impact of its work was assessed accurately. The repositioning of the United Nations development system, including the merger of United Nations information centres with resident coordinator offices, would result in savings and increased efficiency. However, it was important to ensure that the transition did not diminish the gains made by information centres or eliminate the communication tools that had been most effective in the Caribbean region. CARICOM hoped that the merger would result in better delivery of public information services.

37. Inclusivity remained essential to ensuring that all individuals were kept fully updated and engaged in the

process towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Robust efforts must be made to ensure the effective use of existing communication platforms and find innovative ways of using new and evolving media. The Department should continue to pursue creative and effective mechanisms for information-sharing, with a view to engaging young people and the most vulnerable in society.

38. Despite the resource constraints faced by the Organization, the six official languages should continue to be used at as many United Nations events as possible and all United Nations information centres should continue to support multilingualism. Doing so would play a vital role in addressing the persistent digital divide that had been thrown into sharp relief by the COVID-19 pandemic. CARICOM commended the United Nations information centres on their outreach in nearly 100 languages and in Braille. It strongly supported the United Nations Information Centre for the Caribbean region located in Port of Spain, which served territories in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.

39. **Mr. Koba** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the use and exploration of outer space should be carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, in conformity with applicable international law and the principle of non-appropriation of outer space. Improving access to space technology should become a priority of COPUOS. Spacefaring and emerging spacefaring nations should partner more closely with one another and with the relevant international organizations and agencies to build capacities in space science and technology in a sustainable manner.

40. It was important to develop the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in space. Such action should be taken in an inclusive manner and based on respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and equitable access to space science and its applications. Because the proliferation of space debris was a matter of concern, ASEAN urged the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of COPUOS to continue its deliberations on actions to mitigate space debris and encouraged voluntary implementation of the Committee's Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines.

41. ASEAN was a long-standing and strong supporter of peacekeeping, as one of the main elements of its political and security cooperation, with more than 4,800 peacekeepers from ASEAN countries currently participating in various peacekeeping missions. ASEAN



also collaborated on peacekeeping-related issues with its external partners through the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus. All ASEAN countries had endorsed the Action for Peacekeeping Declaration of Shared Commitments, in support of the ongoing effort to make peacekeeping more effective and fit for purpose. United Nations peacekeeping operations should be designed and deployed with a view to pursuing sustainable political solutions. Clear, focused, sequenced, prioritized and achievable mandates should therefore be devised by the Security Council, in close consultation with troop- and police-contributing countries, host States and the Secretariat.

42. Adequate resources were required to enable missions to fulfil their mandates, as missions and peacekeepers could not be expected to do more with less. Member States should therefore pay their financial contribution in full, on time and without conditions, and the Secretariat should reimburse troop- and police-contributing countries without delay.

43. Enhanced cooperation and partnerships between the United Nations, Member States and regional and subregional organizations were of the essence. ASEAN welcomed greater engagement with the Organization on joint analysis, planning and information-sharing in United Nations peace operations, as well as in the context of the 2016–2020 plan of action to implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations. It looked forward to promoting closer collaboration through the adoption and implementation of the 2021–2025 plan of action.

44. ASEAN was a proponent of partnership with the United Nations and other partners for peacekeeping training and capacity building. Viet Nam, Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia had been hosting a triangular partnership programme on a rotating basis since 2018.

45. ASEAN firmly supported the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations. Their diverse contributions as peacekeepers had increased the effectiveness and overall performance of peacekeeping missions.

46. Ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers remained crucial for ASEAN, which strongly condemned attacks against peacekeepers and urged host countries to bring the perpetrators to justice. As COVID-19 continued to spread in countries hosting peacekeeping missions, ASEAN urged the Secretariat to keep working to improve medical capacities and ensure the safety, health, and security of peacekeepers.

47. With regard to special political missions, ASEAN reiterated the primary responsibility of the host country in advancing its own priorities and peacebuilding initiatives. National ownership was crucial to achieving sustainable peace. The international community should support the host country through an inclusive process and effective coordination.

48. ASEAN called for increased coordination and cooperation between special political missions and regional and subregional organizations and entities and remained committed to supporting the work of special political missions and strengthening its partnership with the United Nations in conflict prevention, mediation and sustaining peace. While ASEAN welcomed Secretariat efforts to ensure that women were represented in field-based special political missions and elsewhere, more should be done to promote the representation of women at all levels of the Organization.

49. ASEAN reiterated its support for the Department of Global Communications as it worked to provide clear, timely, factual, accurate, reliable and comprehensive information and to promote impartial information about the Organization's work, particularly against the backdrop of the alarming spread of hoaxes and misinformation.

50. Representing a culturally and linguistically diverse region, ASEAN called on the Department to work with United Nations information centres not only in the six official languages but also in local languages, with a view to reaching the widest possible audience. Lastly, ASEAN encouraged the Department to expand its partnership with regional and subregional organizations, including ASEAN, and to explore joint activities on raising public awareness about cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

51. **Mr. Amorín** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and associated States, said that, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution [2065 \(XX\)](#) in 1965, the General Assembly and the Special Committee on decolonization had recognized that the question of the Malvinas Islands involved a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom, and that the way to put an end to that special and particular colonial situation was the peaceful and negotiated settlement of the dispute between the two parties.

52. In the joint communiqué adopted on 2 July 2020, the Presidents of the MERCOSUR member States and associated States had reiterated the terms of the 1996

Declaration of Potrero de los Funes on the Malvinas Islands and had reaffirmed their support for the legitimate rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute. Moreover, it would be in the interests of the region if the protracted sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were resolved as soon as possible in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the declarations of the Organization of American States and other regional and multilateral forums. The States members of MERCOSUR and associated States reiterated that unilateral action in the disputed area was incompatible with the relevant United Nations resolutions. MERCOSUR called on the United Kingdom to resume negotiations, something that the Government of Argentina was fully prepared to do, with a view to reaching a definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute.

53. **Mr. Adom** (Côte d'Ivoire), speaking on behalf of the Group of Francophone Ambassadors, said that languages had an impact on policy substance and that there could be no national ownership of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development without taking into account multilingualism in its implementation. Similarly, Security Council mandates for missions must take into account the context, including the languages, of the areas in which they were deployed.

54. The language dimension should fully inform the work of the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support. Three key peacekeeping missions were currently operating in French-speaking countries. The use of French by personnel contributed greatly to the effective performance of such missions, especially where they comprised tasks involving the protection of civilians and peace consolidation. The ability to interact with French-speaking local authorities and populations in that language helped to build trust in and acceptance of such missions and a better grasp by them of the reality on the ground. Combined with an understanding of the legal cultures couched in French, it was also key to ensuring the effectiveness of exit strategies, the smooth transfer of responsibility to national justice institutions and the security of civilians and mission personnel.

55. The current crisis had underscored that ignoring the need for multilingualism hampered operations on the ground and that it was vital to disseminate reliable and timely information in different languages in order to reach all population groups, in particular the most vulnerable.

56. Efforts to produce United Nations website and social media content and conduct the activities of its information centres in the six official languages were welcome; it was not enough to simply translate content from English. Difficulties in fully applying multilingualism, which was vital for a transparent multilateral system, in the Secretariat and other United Nations bodies were hampering the equal participation of Member States in international dialogue. Countries must be able to take part in debates and have access to information in official languages and other languages. Multilingualism was thus key to maintaining trust in and acceptance of the United Nations by communities, civil society and, in particular, young people. To that end, the Department of Global Communications should redress the balance between the use of English and that of the other five official languages on the Secretariat's websites.

57. The use of information and communications technology opened up new opportunities for disseminating the message of the United Nations; but traditional media should not be neglected. The role of United Nations Radio, in particular, should be strengthened to broadcast in the official and certain local languages, especially in developing countries. Similarly, the work of the United Nations information centres should be maintained.

58. The financial difficulties facing the Secretariat should not become an impediment to the principles of linguistic equality and parity in the Organization. Proposals made by the Secretariat and the International Organization of la Francophonie for better implementing multilingualism in the United Nations were welcome.

59. *Mr. Sanabria Rivarola (Paraguay), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

60. **Mr. Fialho Rocha** (Cabo Verde), speaking on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, said that its member States welcomed the growing interest on the part of non-Portuguese-speaking countries in joining the Community as associates. The promotion of the Portuguese language would enhance intercultural dialogue and promote respect for cultural diversity, which was a key to multilateralism. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the critical need for accurate, impartial and comprehensive information in various languages for an international audience. The Community commended the commitment of the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications and the Department of Global Communications to promoting the message of the United Nations and their vigorous response to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

61. Information about the United Nations disseminated in Portuguese reached a growing global audience of more than 300 million people. The United Nations and the Community shared common goals, which could not be fully met without reinvigorating multilateralism and multilingualism.

62. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua), speaking on behalf of the Central American Integration System, said that the System remained committed to ensuring that the Latin American and Caribbean region became a colonialism-free and colony-free zone. Accordingly, it strongly supported the legitimate rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom should resume negotiations with a view to finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute as soon as possible and observe the provisions of General Assembly resolution [31/49](#), in which the two parties were called upon to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation while the Islands were going through the process recommended by the Assembly. The System welcomed the decision by the Central American Parliament to adopt 10 June as Day of Central American Solidarity with the Argentine Malvinas Islands. The Special Committee on decolonization had made a significant contribution in its consideration of the issue in the 55 years since the General Assembly had adopted resolution [2065 \(XX\)](#).

63. **Mr. Mohammad Aamir Khan** (Pakistan) said that discussion of peacekeeping reform should reflect the increasingly multidimensional nature of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Pakistan, a major troop-contributing country, had been the first to endorse the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. All stakeholders needed to work together to improve the effectiveness of those operations, and the burden of responsibility for achieving the desired results must be shared equitably. His delegation appreciated the inclusive approach that had been taken to the development of the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework in that regard.

64. The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan needed to be strengthened in order to enable it to monitor and report the intensifying violations by India along the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir. Decolonization and the right to self-determination were objectives of such importance, scope and global relevance that they could not be limited to the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. India, which for decades, through obfuscation and oppression, had

denied the people of the disputed territory their right to self-determination, had launched its so-called final solution in Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019 by imposing a siege, eliminating the territory's statehood and altering its demographic composition, in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant Security Council resolutions and international law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Over the previous 14 months, India had imprisoned all Kashmiri political leaders, illegally detained and, in some cases, tortured 13,000 young Kashmiris, summarily executed young boys, violently suppressed protests, including through the use of blinding pellet guns, and imposed collective punishment, demolishing and burning entire neighbourhoods and villages. The international community must hold India accountable for its egregious violations of the human rights of Kashmiris and ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions providing for a plebiscite to allow the people of Jammu and Kashmir to exercise their right to self-determination.

65. The fundamental right to self-determination continued to be denied in numerous other territories around the world, including Palestine. A just peace in Palestine was not only a matter of regional concern but a primary condition for global peace and security. A two-State solution and full withdrawal by Israel from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories remained the only basis for a settlement. The international community must ensure that the UNRWA was provided with sufficient, predictable and sustainable funding.

66. **Mr. Popolizio** (Peru) said that firm political will was needed to address the remaining 17 cases of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Each case must be assessed and resolved individually, and the administering Powers must demonstrate a genuine commitment to that historic cause and work more closely with the Special Committee to accelerate the decolonization process in those Territories.

67. Peru had consistently supported the legitimate sovereignty rights of Argentina over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [2065 \(XX\)](#). His country's position was based on historical, geographical and legal considerations pertaining to the sovereignty rights and possession over the Malvinas Islands that Argentina had inherited upon independence and had exercised until 1833. Negotiation was the only means of resolving that issue, and Argentina and the United Kingdom should resume talks with a view to finding a peaceful, constructive and lasting solution to

the dispute, guided by the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. The two Governments should continue to strengthen their bilateral relations and foster dialogue, and should allow completion of the Secretary-General's good offices mission as mandated by the General Assembly through successive resolutions. Both parties should refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation, in line with General Assembly resolution 31/49.

68. Measures were required to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, better adapt them to local conditions and improve the security of peacekeeping personnel. Such measures included the use of advanced technology and intelligence-gathering tools, the creation of rapid response units, the introduction of advanced early warning systems and medical support, the development of strategic plans for deployment and withdrawal, and the harmonization of concepts of operations. Troop-contributing countries required accurate and detailed information on mission goals, requirements and challenges. In return, those countries should provide properly trained personnel capable of working with local people in the host countries. Synergies resulting from cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations should be encouraged. Peacekeeping missions would also benefit from greater systematic triangular cooperation at all stages of operations.

69. Women, who currently accounted for 20 per cent of peacekeeping personnel deployed by Peru, should play a greater role in peace operations and related political processes. His country was working to further boost the participation of women in peacekeeping missions. The involvement of peacekeeping personnel in acts of sexual exploitation and abuse or any other type of inappropriate or unethical conduct against civilians was unacceptable.

70. **Ms. Squeff** (Argentina) said that, 55 years after the adoption of resolution 2065 (XX), in which the General Assembly had expressly recognized the existence of a dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom concerning sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, and had called for the two parties to engage in negotiations with a view to finding a definitive solution to that dispute, the United Kingdom continued to ignore the Assembly's call, which had been reiterated in multiple United Nations resolutions and was supported by numerous international and regional organizations. Argentina had therefore asked the Secretary-General to renew his

efforts with regard to the mission of good offices entrusted to him under General Assembly resolution 37/9 in order to assist the parties to resume negotiations.

71. Argentina had always defended the right to self-determination of peoples in all cases in which that right was applicable, and the process of decolonization. The same could not be said for the United Kingdom, which still refused to complete the decolonization of Mauritius by returning to it the Chagos Archipelago, in spite of the advisory opinion handed down by the International Court of Justice and the subsequent General Assembly resolution on the matter. The principle of self-determination, however, applied solely to peoples, and not to all human populations as such. It therefore did not apply to the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands, who had not been subjected to alien subjugation, domination or exploitation by a colonial Power but were descendants of British colonists who had been transferred there after the illegal occupation of that Argentine territory, in 1833. To insist otherwise was to interpret the right to self-determination erroneously in order to legitimize an illegal occupation that violated the territorial integrity of a State. For that reason, no resolution adopted by the General Assembly or the Special Committee contained references to an alleged right to self-determination of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands. Moreover, in 1985 the General Assembly had expressly rejected two attempts by the United Kingdom to amend the resolutions on the question to incorporate references to self-determination.

72. Argentina had nothing against the inhabitants of the Islands. Indeed, in the years following the adoption of resolution 2065 (XX), Argentina and the United Kingdom had begun negotiations in which various options had been contemplated in order to resolve the dispute. During those years, Argentina had taken measures that had improved the lives of the islanders, such as the construction of the Islands' first airport and the provision of fuel, health and education facilities. The commitment by every democratic Government in Argentina to respect the way of life and interests of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands had been written into the country's Constitution. That did not mean, however, that those inhabitants had a right to self-determination, or that Argentina could agree to the United Kingdom continuing its unilateral acts in the disputed area. Such acts included illegally exploiting renewable and non-renewable natural resources, maintaining a military base of unjustifiable proportions and holding military exercises that only served to bring tension to the region, in spite of General Assembly resolution 41/11, in which the Assembly had urged States of all other regions, especially the militarily significant States, scrupulously

to respect the region of the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and cooperation, in particular through the reduction and eventual elimination of their military presence there.

73. Colonialism should have been eradicated long ago; but reality could not be denied forever. Argentina would continue to follow the path of international law, diplomacy and multilateralism and invited the United Kingdom to do the same and return to the negotiating table so that the two Governments could together seek the best way of ending that unnecessarily protracted dispute.

74. **Mr. Gonzato** (European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia and, in addition, the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina, commended the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation for its work, which continued to improve understanding of the sources and effects of exposure to ionizing radiation on human health and the environment. The European Union looked forward to the holding of that Committee's planned virtual 67th session.

75. The European Union would soon adopt its space programme for the period 2021–2027, with a view to boosting its capabilities in the fields of navigation, Earth observation, space situational awareness and governmental satellite communication. In that context, the European Union would examine ways of implementing the preamble and 21 guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities that had been adopted by COPUOS and the General Assembly. The decision by COPUOS in June 2019 to establish a five-year working group on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities was another positive step.

76. The European Union remained committed to achieving a just and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a two-State solution and an agreement to end the occupation that had begun in 1967, fulfilling the aspirations and needs of both parties on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions and within internationally agreed parameters. The European Union was ready to work with both parties, its partners in the region and the international community for the resumption of meaningful negotiations.

77. The refugee issue was one of the internationally recognized parameters for a solution to the conflict. It was vital that UNRWA continued to provide Palestine refugees with the necessary protection and services, including health care and education. The Agency made

a key contribution to the viability of the two-State solution and was a stabilizing force in the region; the European Union would continue to support it in all its fields of operations, including in East Jerusalem. The generosity and efforts of the host countries were greatly appreciated. The European Union and its member States were, collectively, the largest contributors to the UNRWA budget and continued to answer its call for additional funds. The European Union would remain a staunch and predictable supporter of the Agency, including with regard to its efforts to improve efficiency and strengthen management. Additional financial support from other and new donors was appreciated and all partners should translate that step into multi-annual contributions.

78. In accordance with international law, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the European Union had consistently reiterated its strong opposition to the settlement policy of Israel and to any actions taken in that context. Israel should halt settlement expansion, especially in sensitive areas such as Har Homa, Givat Hamatos and the E1 area. The European Union would not recognize any changes in the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed to by the parties. Both parties, including any future Israeli Government, must act in accordance with international law. The normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Bahrain were positive developments, as was the commitment by Israel to suspend plans to unilaterally annex areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Any unilateral decision that undermined the chances of achieving a lasting, agreed solution should be avoided and any annexation would constitute a serious violation of international law.

79. The situation in Gaza continued to cause grave concern. Israel must respect the right to peaceful protest and Hamas must ensure that protests remained non-violent. Ending the closure policy, fully opening crossing points and allowing humanitarian access while addressing the legitimate security concerns of Israel would contribute to the implementation of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). All Palestinian factions must commit themselves to uphold democratic principles prior to planned upcoming elections in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in the Gaza Strip. Strong, inclusive, accountable and functioning democratic Palestinian institutions based on respect for the rule of law and human rights were vital for implementing Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and improving the prospects of a two-State solution a reality.



80. In 2019, the Israeli and Palestinian authorities had shown the political will to negotiate a tax revenue transfer arrangement. Such political will was needed to achieve a two-State solution. Ultimately, failure to implement international law was the real challenge to the realization of peace and security in the Middle East. Progress towards resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would also contribute to the resolution of other crises in the region.

81. The collective interest in maintaining global peace, security and stability was best served by working with and supporting the United Nations. Conflict prevention and resolution, which were a priority of the strategic partnership between the European Union and the United Nations, were key and the special political missions played a crucial role. To be effective, peacekeeping missions must be fully resourced and the international community must provide predictable and sustainable financing. All Member States should pay their contributions to the regular and peacekeeping budgets in full, unconditionally and on time.

82. An agreement signed in September 2020, which would facilitate exchanges and close cooperation between European Union missions and United Nations peacekeeping operations, would also contribute to implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the wider United Nations reform agenda. States members of the European Union would continue to contribute to the work of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. The Special Committee's report, with its new structure, would be key in rendering peacekeeping more efficient and effective. Protection focal points and advisors were essential for effectively monitoring and reporting grave violations of human rights and holding their perpetrators accountable. Troop- and police-contributing countries should improve the gender balance in all components of peacekeeping operations. Accurate information and intelligence were critical for ensuring the safety of peacekeepers and protecting civilians. The environmental impact of United Nations peacekeeping operations must be more closely examined. With regard to regional contributions to peacekeeping, African peace operations had proven to be especially valuable and needed predictable and sustained financing from the international community.

83. The launch of the global communications strategy for 2020 and measures, such as the Verified campaign, taken to combat the wave of disinformation that been unleashed in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic were welcome. Concern about the dissemination of disinformation was widely shared, as had been underscored by the cross-regional statement issued in

June 2020 on the infodemic in the context of COVID-19, the 132 signatories of which included the European Union and its 27 member States. The focus of the Department of Global Communications on the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change and gender equality was commendable. Multilingualism, however, had been neglected since the outbreak of the pandemic. More must be done to ensure that all the official languages of the United Nations had equal standing.

84. *Mr. Kelapile (Botswana) resumed the Chair.*

85. **Mr. Nyaga** (Kenya) said that the international community should make a renewed commitment to addressing the issue of granting independence to colonial countries and their peoples. His country supported any action to facilitate the implementation of United Nations resolutions concerning Western Sahara, in particular with regard to the holding of a referendum in that Territory. Kenya also supported the Middle East peace process.

86. Conflicts around the world were increasingly characterized by violent extremism, exposing peacekeepers to greater dangers and demands. In some cases, they themselves had become targets of the belligerents. Regional organizations had a vital role to play in peace support operations. Although the African Union Mission (AMISOM) in Somalia had been largely successful in dismantling the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, the latter remained capable of mounting large-scale attacks. His country supported the transition plan for Somalia but cautioned against haste that could erase the gains made thus far. AMISOM must be reinforced with the full support of the United Nations, including by means of funding through assessed contributions.

87. The benefits of investment in space technology and science, including with regard to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and combating climate change and food insecurity, should be made available to all.

88. **Mr. Jiménez** (Nicaragua) said that effective measures must be taken in line with international law to remove the obstacles preventing peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation from exercising their right to self-determination, independence and economic, social and environmental development. There was a need to redouble efforts to fulfil the mandate bestowed by the General Assembly on the Special Committee on decolonization.

89. His country had always supported the legitimate and imprescriptible sovereignty rights of Argentina over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South

Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which were occupied by the United Kingdom. The National Assembly had declared 10 June as the National Day of Solidarity with Argentina on the Malvinas Islands.

90. Puerto Rico was a Latin American and Caribbean country under the yoke of a colonial Power. It needed support in its struggle for independence and self-determination. The Special Committee had adopted 39 resolutions and decisions on the situation in Puerto Rico, and the General Assembly should closely examine all aspects of the issue.

91. With regard to the inalienable right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination and independence, the parties needed to enter into intensive negotiations in good faith and without preconditions. The situation could only be resolved by the holding of a referendum, which in turn required the appointment by the Secretary-General of a new Personal Envoy for the Western Sahara. Nicaragua expressed its solidarity with the people and Government of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

92. The international community should support the struggles for self-determination and independence of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories with the aim of bringing to an end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

*Statements made in exercise of the right of reply*

93. **Mr. Rogers** (United Kingdom), replying to comments made by the representatives of Mexico, speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, Uruguay, speaking on behalf of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), Nicaragua, speaking on behalf of the Central American Integration System and in its national capacity, Argentina, and Peru, said that the United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas of both Territories, or regarding the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in article 1 of the two International Covenants on human rights, by virtue of which they freely determined their political status and freely pursued their economic, social and cultural development. Consequently, no dialogue on sovereignty was possible unless the Falkland Islanders so wished.

94. The 2013 referendum, in which 99.8 per cent of those who had voted had wanted to maintain their current status as an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom, had sent a clear message that the people of

the Islands did not want a dialogue on sovereignty. Argentina should respect those wishes. His Government's relationship with the Falkland Islands, as with all of its Overseas Territories, was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to determine their own future. None of the resolutions to which reference had been made in the course of the meeting modified or diluted the obligation to respect the legally binding principle of self-determination, to which his country attached great importance. The United Kingdom remained committed to defending the right of the people of the Falkland Islands to self-determination and their right to determine their own political, social and economic future.

95. The United Kingdom had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, which had been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. Mauritius had never held sovereignty over the archipelago, and his Government did not recognize its claim. However, the United Kingdom stood by its long-standing commitment, first made in 1965, to cede sovereignty of the Territory to Mauritius when it was no longer required for defence purposes.

96. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) said that the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were an integral part of Argentine territory and that, being illegally occupied by the United Kingdom, they were therefore the subject of a sovereignty dispute between the two parties, which was recognized by a number of international organizations. That illegal occupation had led the General Assembly to adopt 10 resolutions on the issue, all of which recognized the existence of the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands and called on the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations with a view to finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute as soon as possible. For its part, the Special Committee on decolonization had repeatedly adopted resolutions in the same vein, most recently as contained in its report for 2020 (A/75/23). The principle of self-determination, which the United Kingdom used as the basis for its refusal to resume negotiations on sovereignty, was inapplicable to the dispute in question, as affirmed by the General Assembly and the Special Committee. Consequently, the 2013 vote in the Malvinas Islands was simply a unilateral action by the United Kingdom, devoid of any legal value; it therefore in no way changed the essence of the question of the Malvinas, it did not resolve the sovereignty dispute and it had no effect on the legitimate rights of Argentina.

97. According to the advisory opinion recently adopted by the International Court of Justice concerning

the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965, it was for the General Assembly to pronounce on the modalities by which the free and genuine will of the people of a Non-Self-Governing Territory was expressed, including the formulation of questions submitted for popular consultation. Consequently, a so-called referendum without General Assembly approval would lack legal validity.

98. The vote of 2013 had done nothing to change the course of meetings held in the Special Committee since that date, where resolutions on the question of the Malvinas Islands continued to be approved by consensus in the usual terms. The solution to the sovereignty dispute was not dependent on the results of a vote in which British subjects had been asked whether they wished to remain British. Allowing the British inhabitants of the Islands to arbitrate in a sovereignty dispute to which their own country was a party distorted the right to self-determination of peoples, given that the people of the Malvinas were not a people within the meaning of international law. The interests and way of life of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands were adequately addressed by resolutions of the General Assembly and by the Constitution of Argentina. Lastly, Argentina reaffirmed its legitimate sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which were an integral part of its national territory.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*